

1. Medical SAS Datasets Final for FY2003

National Data Systems has announced that the Medical SAS inpatient and outpatient files were finalized on October 23, 2004. A subsequent revision, on November 18, 2004, to correct the format library (see item 2 below), did not change any data. For details, see <http://vaww.aac.va.gov/npcd/new/Default.php>.

2. New Variable Labels and Formats In SF and SE Files

As a member of the Data Consortium, VIREC received notification that National Data Systems has made the following changes to the dataset dictionaries of the Outpatient Visit (SF) and Event (SE) files for FY2002, FY2003, FY2004, and FY2005:

- In the SF file, the label for the variable RAD was changed to "Claimed Radiation Exposure Location" (Meaning the patient claimed radiation exposure, and this variable identifies the location of the exposure, using values of 1-4, as shown in VIREC Research User Guide at <http://www.virec.research.med.va.gov/References/RUG/RUG-Outpatient02.pdf>.)
- In the SE file, the label for RAD was changed to "Claimed Radiation Exposure Indicator" and the attached print format to "XXYN." That indicates whether the encounter was or was not related to claimed radiation exposure.

These changes were made to the data dictionaries on the files; data content did not change.

3. Report Issued on Survey of VHA Intensive Care Units

Researchers addressing in institutional measures will be interested in the Healthcare Analysis and Information Group (HAIG) report *2004 Survey of Intensive Care Units in the VHA*. Data from 213 ICUs at 128 VHA locations are summarized on topics such as number of beds, length of stay, categories of staff, information systems, and protocols followed. Facility level data are provided in appendices. The report is on the VHA Intranet at <http://vaww.va.gov/haig/Projects.htm#icu2004>.

4. HDR / Data Standardization News

On November 23, 2004, Dr. Robert M. Kolodner, Acting VHA Chief Health Informatics Officer, announced the beginning of field-based efforts necessary to implement the Health Data Repository (HDR). The HDR, along with Data Standardization, will form the foundation for the VHA comprehensive electronic medical record. Starting in July 2005, all medical centers will begin transmitting selected data to the HDR for every active patient in a "day forward" methodology. By December 2005, HDR will have collected historical data back to 1999 from all sites for every patient who has a unique national identifier. A data warehouse will hold these data and researchers will be able to work with the Financial and Clinical Data Mart to build data marts that will allow queries of the data in a manner that will support their research. For additional information, visit the HDR Implementation Web site at http://vaww.teamshare.va.gov/HDR_Implementation/.

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